

My name is Taylor Habedank. I am 16 years old, and I've been a victim of child abuse since I was 11. I am here in support of Wyatt's Law.

My mom filed for divorce to keep my sister and me safe from our father. He was abusive and alcoholic. We tried to get help and were called liars for two and a half years. My mom was sent to the ER. I was brought to the hospital for a sprained back and later, a concussion. My younger sister witnessed everything.

During visitation, I called the police multiple times. CPS was also called. But his rights were never taken away. I testified three times before he finally agreed to a plea deal. His felony became a misdemeanor.

The effects of this abuse were not only physical. After dealing with more authorities and interviews than I had ever imagined possible, the pressure became too much. I was hopeless, and two weeks before I started high school, I attempted suicide.

Everything that my family and I went through will stay with me forever. I have changed. I jump at white pickup trucks, because I know that's what he drives. I am scared to take out the garbage, because he knows where I live. And still, you cannot find his record in a searchable public system and see what he did to his children.

Children need to have their rights protected, because they cannot fight for themselves. My abuser is a successful businessman that wears a suit and tie and makes a six figure salary. No one would ever guess that he is a convicted child abuser. That is why we need this registry. It would give people the power to protect their children, and force accountability on abusers. It is our job to protect the rights of these kids who have no voice. So I speak for my younger sister, and for Wyatt, because he can no longer speak for himself. I speak for all of the other children who were hurt because the information they needed wasn't available. I know that Wyatt's law couldn't have saved me, but it could have saved Wyatt. It could protect any child in my abuser's future and save countless other children who are in the path of abusers because the adults who do love them have no way to verify the pasts of those around them. Thank you for your time and your service. I am trusting you will do the right thing for all of us.

Sincerely,

Taylor Habedank